

Robin Continued:

can have a real conversation about New Orleans that lasts more than 7 minutes. hopefully soon i can do something else. something helpful. i know almost all of my white friends with cars are safe but what about my next-door neighbor who walked her granddaughter to school everyday? what about the crackhead who knocked on my door once a week asking for money and once gave me a necklace that said "I DO"? what about Junk Men George, Mister P, all my ex's drug dealers? what about Uz, S, Sw, tehblade and the rest of the Italian Pie crew? OH GOD, what about Felton?  
to all of you ex-New Orleansians: i'm sorry, i haven't called to see how you're doing. i felt like a real asshole, but i do think about you all the time. -Robin

## INTRODUCTION TO DISASTER SERVICES - HARRIET

### 1.) the Horrors.

I got the Horrors this morning for the first time in years. The Horrors- probably everyone gets them, but if I try to describe to you what they feel like I am going to sound like someone who is Mentally Unsound which would be a false impression. But, in any case, 7:30 AM found me sitting on Christy LeMaster's bedroom floor in my underpants, eating cereal and just bawling. It is actually really hilarious in retrospect. I had gone into Christy's room to feed the cat (Christy herself being out of town) but didn't quite make it to the food dish before breaking down. I was afraid of being late for my disaster services class, so I was shovelling cereal into my mouth, elbowing the hungry cat away from my bowl and dripping tears into my milk. Really racked with sobs I was, snot + shudders + everything. Eventually I recovered (looked in the mirror, which made me laugh. Works every time) and managed to get moving, but I kept weeping intermittently through the class. Rather Embarrassing.

### 2.) CLOTHING

I like to avoid, if I can, being my usual disgusting self around strangers who might not understand. Asia calls this "Respect for the elderly." whatever you call it, it is an attempt to not be emanating stale sweat aromas or displaying obscene rock + roll slogans while trying to be taken seriously. It doesn't seem like a bad idea, but I am terrible at it. I put on awkward, ill fitting garments that I have decided meet some standard of normalcy, only to notice later that they are covered in cat hair or, for example, actual dirt or the buttons come

open at inopportune moments. So I <sup>was</sup> strangely clad, still dirty and weeping in front of strangers in this grey, windowless room all morning while trying to convey the impression that I am a good person to have around in a crisis. great.

### 3.) CURSES + ZOUNDS.

Last week I decided that I needed to take Action but I didn't know how. So my actions have mostly involved filling out forms, answering emails and making frantic phone calls to strangers who patiently explain to me that I have to fill out more forms if I want to do anything useful. And now the Red Cross won't send me because I don't have health insurance. I wish I could afford to go down to the gulf by myself. I wish I had any idea how to be useful if I did such a thing. I wish somebody would teach me CPR, give me a stack of blankets and put me behind the wheel of a sandwich truck. Or something. Because, like, I am crying and wearing a stupid shirt. Really. Put Me in charge of the alleviation of human suffering.



iii HAPPY, ASIA + ROBIN!!!

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# The Nose Knows!

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MAD, SAD AND UNPLEASANT COMPANY, LADIES + GENTLEMEN

I found out about the hurricane the way I find out about a lot of things, which is some boy chasing Robln's tail. In this case, the boy in question was not trying to impress Robln by telling obscure rock 'n roll anecdotes, but rather trying to call her on the cell phone.

It didn't work. Her New Orleans phone was not accepting calls.

After that we started watching the news. And losing our shit.

Because who-knows-(STILL)who's-dead, and because this-racist-bullshit-is-straight-out-of-post-apocalyptic-fiction, and because we-are-in-the-g-d-midwest-and-we-don't-know-what-to-do, and because our beautiful-magical-dying-perfect-crazy-city-is-underwater, and everything is actually for real, seriously FUCKED. I would say that we went crazy, except that implies that anywhere along the line we started to get better, which really isn't true.

My particular version of going crazy consists of reading the Autobiography of Malcolm X for the first time, and deciding that maybe white people really are devils, in which case you really can't blame them, you know, like man-eating tigers and all that, and deciding that right now was the moment to wrestle with the big questions like, "Can you continue to live in a country which condones and commits the genocide of its own people or do you have to move in with Robln's parents in Brazil?"

I go to work and get drunk and play shows and the entire time I am a tiny ball of fury fantasizing about getting on a bus full of angry evacuees and hijacking it and taking them to the White House where presumably we'd use those guns they looted from Walmart to FUCK SHIT UP. I have actually said, "Rideshare my ass! I will rideshare a van full of people with guns to Washington D.C. but that is it!" \*

This is the problem with being raised by revolutionaries.

I know there are supposed to be those five stages of grief: "Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance" but I seem to be pretty firmly entrenched in stage two with no sign of trying to move on.

Except:

I love you. And I am glad you are not dead. And let's try to make things better. Let's keep trying.

Last year at this time our friend Sam got hit by a car in Columbia, MO, while his band was on the way to my house to play a show. He was in the ICU

for a week, in the hospital here for 6 more. He didn't walk for a long time, and now his leg is full of shark cartilage.

And next week I'm going to his wedding in Iowa. He's getting married to Grace, who makes beautiful music on her own and art with disgruntled teenagers, and casseroles for drunk people at 2 in the morning.

There will still always be these good things. Let's keep making more of them.

And maybe start a revolution too.

*Love, Asia*

If you want to help go to New Orleans network. Read Abrann's awesome blog: [blogs.chron.com/exile](http://blogs.chron.com/exile)  
And sorry if I've been an asshole, what, with all this stage 2 Anger.  
- Asia  
\* It is true I only have my learner's permit, and also guns make me puke, but I'm sure it would all turn out fine!

On the first of September Asia and I were at work, both crying and she said, "it's gonna be alright." I said, "no, it won't, not this time." I generally feel that I am a kind, helpful person with a common love for all humanity, but I have not been that person for the past 10 days. I have done nothing to help my brethren in New Orleans, and I love New Orleans. Besides Rio, it is my favorite city in the world. I cry almost every time I leave it, so why can't I do anything now except make a lot of noise? Maybe that's a place to start but all I really want to do is run away.  
I'm so jaded. I don't trust the Red Cross because my mom is a blood banker and told me they were corrupt since I was 5. I don't trust FEMA because they are part of the U.S. government but that's no excuse not to give someone my paycheck, salvation army? I'm just a lazy alcoholic crybaby.  
It's no secret that I'm an alcoholic, but I'm a very responsible one. I go to work on time and if I happen to book a show while I'm blacked out I'll find a note the next day. "Dear Robln, MADZZ! MIAZZ! real! serious! wake up you stoopid alcoholic Robln! -love Robln"  
Living in New Orleans was perfect for me because it was socially acceptable to be a little drunk all the time and a lot drunk most of the time. For the past year or so I have really cut down on my drinking until, oh I'd say, August 31st then I started something I like to call Blackout Therapy. cry and drink, drink and yell.  
I go to work, I go to shows, I play shows but I'm too depressed to make out? I sleep fitfully through nightmares of flood & fire. I think of all the perfect days I had in New Orleans, riding my bike on Algiers Point, walking through City Park to the track, sitting on the stoop naming all the neighborhood cats after my favorite drummers. I think of all the perfect nights I had in New Orleans, everyone dancing, sweating naked at a Morning 40 Federation show at the Dragon's Den, asking Craig if he has bail money for me before picking a fight with The Happy Talk Band at Molly's Cbtw/ did you know Jim Monahan said he was keeping Molly's open until they force him away at gun point? or just laying on Happy & Asia's porch with Pec Jay or Luke or che swilling Mad Dog.  
It took 10 days for me to even have a real conversation about New Orleans with anyone because I end up sobbing or punching within 3 minutes. hopefully in another 10 days I  
sax: Robln continued